CAMBRIDGE CAMDEN SOCIETY.

At the last meeting of the society, held March 6th, five new members were admitted, and the following report was read by the secretary:—

"The committee have to announce the publication of the sixth part of the 'Instrumenta Ecclesiastica;' which contains working-drawings of a parclose, a bier, coffin-lids, a lich-gate, and a font-cover.

They have also put in hand the sixth number of the 'Illustrations of Monumental Brasses,' which will complete that series in a single volume. The subjects chosen for illustration are a priest, from S. Margaret's, Horsmonden, Kent; a judge, from S. Peter's, Gunby, Lincolnshire; a knight and a priest, from S. Mary's, Broadwater, Sussex.

Grants of money have been made towards the restoration of S. Mary's, Stogumber, Somersetshire; S. Mary's, Rampisham, Dorsetshire; Holy Trinity, Rodgwick, Sussex; S. Peter's, Frome, Somersetshire; and a small grant has been given in token of approbation of the design for a new church at Chapeltown, in the parish of S. John, Ecclesfield, Yorkshire.

A third part of the Transactions is in progress.

They would take this opportunity of making known that the Messrs. Powell, of the Whitefriars Glass-works, London, have applied themselves to the manufacture of flowered quarries from the designs put forth by the society in the 'Ecclesiologist,' Nos. 25, 26, and the 'Instrumenta Ecclesiastica,' Part III. The manufacturers have secured a patent for their process. The removal of the tax upon glass will now enable church-builders and restorers to bring flowered-quarries into general use.

The committee give notice, in pursuance of law 16, that at the next meeting, on April 24, they will propose that the 16th law of the society be suspended on the anniversary meeting of May 8th, in order to facilitate the general discussion of the recommendation from the committee which will then be submitted to the members.

They have further determined that non-resident members shall be allowed to vote on that occasion by proxy. Forms of proxy will be furnished to each member at an early opportunity."

To be, or not to be, is still the question; and the advocates of either side are actively canvassing for supporters on the day of trial. The admission of proxies is considered by some to have nearly settled the doubt, and they look upon the society as re-established.

We are not quite so certain of this ourselves, as we know that many of the non-resident members have regarded with sorrow the proceedings of the association. Fully impressed as we are, with a knowledge of the improvement in church architecture which this society has materially aided in effecting, we would rather see it completely dissolved than that it should be permitted to pursue the dangerous path into which, by insidious hands, it has been guided,—a path, the end of which is too plainly visible.

Marbles of North Derbyshire.—There still exists a considerable portion of ambiguity respecting the ancient trade and commerce of England. The district of North Derbyshire, from the difficulty of its approach, being nearly surrounded with mountainous ridges, and intersected by deep defiles and mountain passes—is equally difficult. These combined features give that part of North Derbyshire denominated the High Peak, a dull, heavy, isolated character. Nevertheless, a district like North Derbyshire, abounding as it does with the useful ores of lead and iron, with other natural productions, would necessarily have some intercourse of trade in early ages. There is sufficient evidence to prove that a very large and considerable quantity of Derbyshire marble, and fluor spar were objects at that time of exportation. At the different spar manufactories in Derby, Matlock, &c., this elegant material is worked into a variety of ornamental and useful articles; such as vases, cups, necklaces, ear-drops, &c. Thousands of these are exported to foreign markets.

FREEMASONS OF THE CHURCH.

March 11th, 1845.—The Rev. G. Pocock, LL.B., in the chair. The minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed. Mr. W. P. Griffith, F.S.A., was elected secretary. The following additional vice-presidents were elected: Lord John Manners, M.P.; Sir Walter James, M.P.; C. Baring Wall, Esq., M.P.; Benjamin D'Israeli, Esq., M.P.; and C. Newdigate Newdegate, Esq., M.P.

Mr. W. G. Rogers exhibited a specimen of ironwork from Hampton-court Palace, consisting of a portcullis and a porter's guard: also a portrait of George IV. in mosaic, from the picture presented to Pope Pius VII., the only Protestant portrait in the Papal palace. Mr. J. W. Archer exhibited a cast from a seal of Bramber Castle, Sussex, found lately underground.

On the motion of Mr. W. P. Griffith, it was resolved that a deputation, consisting of the Rev. Hugh Hughes, B.D., Rector of St. John's, Clerkenwell; the Rev. G. Pocock, LL.B.; Messrs. C. H. Smith, T. Dighton, W. G. Rogers, and Mr. J. Finn, should wait upon Messrs. Reid and Co., to endeavour to dissuade them from disfiguring St. John's Gate, Clerkenwell, with compo, now commenced, and if successful, that the secretary should call a public meeting to adopt immediate measures for its careful restoration.

Mr. J. W. Archer then read a discourse upon the existing monumental brasses of England.

The lecturer explained, that monuments described by the conventional term brasses, were composed of various alloys, some of which he described. He then spoke of the knowledge of the principles of architecture and of the arts, generally cultivated by churchmen of the middle ages, and ascribed to them the design of some of the monumental brasses. This was followed by some description of the process by which a brass was executed, and the workmanship was ascribed to the goldsmiths of the time; the tombs of Richard II. and Queen Eleanor were as evidence of the combined operation of the goldsmiths, and engravers' work. After this, the lecturer touched upon the arts of the thirteenth century, and produced arguments in support of the existence of an original school of art in England previous to the revival in Italy. Some circumstances indicating the introduction of certain features of Greek art during the thirteenth century were mentioned, and several brasses of the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries described. In the examination of certain tombs a resemblance was discovered between the appearance of the body and the effigy on the tomb. A monumental brass, recently found in the city, was mentioned, as affording evidence of the use of colour, and the nature of the material. The destruction of brasses, both before and after the Reformation, was commented upon, and some suggestions were thrown out with regard to the possibility of brasses, which had been concealed in troubled times, being discovered.

The lecturer, in conclusion, spoke of the utility of the monumental brasses, as guides to historical painters for costume, &c.; described the decline of the art, and its ultimate disuse, and delivered some reasons for its revival, which he had undertaken and made some progress in. He expressed a hope that, in the awakened inquiry now going on relative to church architecture and decoration, the beauty and religious character of the old monumental brass might entitle it to due attention and an appropriate place among the accessories of pointed architecture.

Orphan Working School, City-road.—The great increase of claimants upon the benefits of this charity have induced the committee to erect a larger and more commodious building, which is now being carried into execution at Haverstock-hill, Hampstead-road, under the superintendence of Mr. Ainger, who has furnished the design. In a circular issued by the committee, it is stated that 6,200*l.*, out of the benefactions of deceased governors and friends, have already been expended, by order of the general court, in the purchase of the ground. About 14,000*l.* are required for the completion of the plan.

MUSEUMS OF ART.

Mr. Ewart a few evenings since obtained leave to bring in a bill to enable town-councils to establish museums of art in corporate towns. The advantages that must arise from encouraging a taste for the arts by the means proposed, are so great, so various, and so evident, that no diversity of opinion was expressed in the House.

In introducing the subject, the hon. member took occasion to say that there existed peculiar circumstances at the present time for affording facility in the diffusion of works of art throughout the country. By the railways, specimens might be sent down to the different large towns, and it would be the fault of the Government if there should be one without a museum of such a character as would give a sound taste for the arts, and thus enable the people to apply the skill they thereby attained to manufactures. He trusted, therefore, that before long he should see the system of schools of design generally perfected throughout the country. But exhibitions of works of art were moreover necessary to educate the eye of the people. It was well known that until the Romans had an abundance of specimens, and, as it were, were educated by the eye, they never themselves made any great progress in the arts.

Mr. Wyse, in seconding the motion, pointed out the number of contingencies to which voluntary institutions were subject, and how difficult it was to guarantee the continuance of them if they depended solely on the disposition of the inhabitants of large towns.

Sir Robert Peel suggested, that instead of giving the town-council too extensive powers to tax the people for the purposes contemplated, they should first endeavour to obtain by voluntary contributions, sufficient money to provide the museum; the edifice being erected by such means, on the clear understanding that it would be henceforth maintained by local taxation. Such a plan would insure the permanency of the museum, and afford a guarantee and an encouragement to the rich and liberal to come forward in order to establish the museum. The same experiment had been tried successfully in respect to the endowment of new churches. If the town-council should obtain the power proposed, he hoped they would thus make it subservient to local liberality and improvement. He had no doubt that the effect of such a plan would be to lead many of the resident gentlemen of each neighbourhood not merely to assist in rearing the edifice, but in supplying it with valuable presents.

Mr. Brotherton submitted a calculation he had made with regard to a large town with which he was connected, by which it appeared that a tax of one halfpenny in the pound would be sufficient to raise a building which should cost 50,000*l.* He further stated, that it was much better to cultivate a taste for the arts at the public expense, than to raise a large amount of taxation for the prevention and punishment of crime.

Mr. M. Gore thought that the proposed step would tend not only to raise the arts and sciences to a loftier eminence, but at the same time, while improving the morals and purifying the spirit of the people, it would extend the base on which rested the foundation of peace, security, and national prosperity.

Mr. Labouchere observed, that the proposed measure would afford a very important assistance in the promotion of the objects of the school of design, which was extending its operations throughout the country, and accomplishing the greatest good in many branches of manufacture. He thought it to be of great importance that the people should have opportunities of seeing models of works of art of the highest class; and without it all schools of design would labour in vain to diffuse a correct taste in art and drawing. The very best models happened to be those which could be supplied at an extremely cheap rate—casts of the best statues of antiquity and bas-reliefs. The late Sir F. Chantrey, who, to his honour, raised himself from humble circumstances, used to be a constant attendant in the School of Design, and often regretted that he had not had his mind trained and his eyes educated by being accustomed to such works of art from an earlier period of his life.

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